

UNCLEANNESS AND THE EVIL EYE

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with the back of his knife to ward off from her the evil eye.¹ In India a small object of iron is hung on a cradle because iron wards off the evil eye.² The jettatura belongs to persons born at certain periods in the year, or a woman's behavior during pregnancy may cause her child to have it.³ People are held to be in danger of the evil eye in prosperity and on festive occasions when they put on fine dress and ornaments. Witches, beggars, and people of the lowest class have the evil eye. Diseases of decline are attributed to the jettatura. Cattle cease to give milk and trees lose leaves on account of it. Flowers and fruit wither untimely. Gems break or lose brilliancy.⁴

568. Amulets against the evil eye. In the Dutch East Indies the phallus, or the symbol of it, is a charm against the evil eye which is cast in quarrels.⁵ Roman boys wore a symbol of this kind. Obscene gestures were supposed to ward off the evil eye.⁶ In some parts of India a tiger's tooth or claw is an amulet for the same purpose, also obscene symbols or strings of cowries. Whatever dangles and flutters attracts attention to itself and away from the thing to be protected.⁷ Hindoo parents give their children ugly and inauspicious names, especially if they have lost some children.⁸ The notion of the evil eye was very strong amongst the Arabs, with the notion that beauty attracted it.⁹ Mohammed himself believed in the evil eye. The superstition came down from the heathen period when rags and dirty things were hung on children to protect them from the evil eye.¹⁰ The veiling of women amongst the Arabs was probably due to it. Beautiful women also painted black spots on their cheeks.¹¹ Children, horses, and asses are now disfigured amongst Moslems to protect them from the risk they would run if beautiful. To save a child from the evil eye they say « God be good to thee " and spit in its face.¹² Amongst the Bedouins, whenever one utters praises he must add: " Mashallah," that is, God avert ill! The only other way to avert ill is to give the praised object to him who praised it.¹³ Glittering and waving objects are much used by Moslems on dress and horse caparisons to distract attention. They put texts of the Koran on streamers on their houses for the same purpose.

569. Devices against the evil eye. Homer has the idea that the gods curb the pride of prosperity and are jealous of it. His heroes are taught as a life policy to avert envy. Self-disparagement is an approved pose.¹⁴ Plutarch¹⁵

¹ Hanoteau et Letourneux, *La Xabytie* ^ II, 219. ⁸ *Ibid.* ^ I, 120.

² JASB, II, 170. * *Ibid.*

⁶ Wilken in *Bijdragen tot T. L. en V.-kunde*, XXXV, 399.

⁶ *Jewish Encyc.*) s.v. "Evil Eye."

⁷ Monier-Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism* ^ 254. ⁸ *fbid.*, 371.

⁹ Lane, *Arabian Nights*, I, 67.

¹⁰ W. R. Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 448.

¹¹ Von Kremer, *Kulturgesch. des Orients*, II, 212, 253.

¹² *des Islam*, no. Pischon, *Einfuss*

¹⁴ Keller, *Horn. Soc.*, 114*

¹⁵ *Globus*, LXXV, 193.

is *Symposium*, V, 9.